

My child has a brain disorder, too...

Heidi Kern
3616 Waverly Hills
Lansing, MI 48917
417-371-3463

Dear Health Policy Committee Members:

My son is 12 years old and has multiple mental health diagnoses. He has suffered greatly in every part of his life since he was a year old. He has been diagnosed with autism, ADHD, depression and anxiety. He has suffered from suicidal thoughts and hallucinations.

We have private insurance that has helped greatly for his physical needs. He has been hospitalized several times with epilepsy and asthma which is paid in full ~~buy~~ BY by our insurance.

The difference with his mental health issues is problematic. His array of mental health issues are covered by our private health insurance at less of a rate than his medical issues. **In addition, many needs that he has are not covered at all. He has needed OT, PT, socialization groups, and ST. None of which were covered at all.** This led me to having to work with him and try to provide these necessary services myself, so I had to quit my job and pay for services out of pocket.

This has been a great burden on our family. I had to refinance my car to get lower monthly payments; we owe more on our house than it is worth because of debts. Simple things like food, clothing, gas, and medications are matched up with mental health bills. I have been sent to collection agencies many times due to choosing between food and mental health medical bills.

Probably the saddest time of year is Christmas were we have to get help with food and presents for my son. Unfortunately, they are not things I would love to buy for him; the help is wonderful but embarrassing. The debt that we have as a family is horrific. I believe that my child is the number one priority and I need help with all his mental health services.

Respectfully,

Heidi Kern